



Good Intentions

The South African Council for Education ([SACE](#)), which is a registration council, has as a slogan “Towards Excellence in Education”.

Excelling what?

The Quality Learning and Teaching Campaign (QLTC; see attached) has the slogan “Ensuring Quality Learning and Teaching for All”.

What quality is it talking about?

Do any of the stakeholders (Departmental Official, Teachers, Learners, Parents and Community) think that “quality” means anything more than “good”, or “nice”?

The intentions are good. But the road to hell is paved with good intentions. Seven years after the QLTC was signed, the teachers were still being victimised. The obligations of the

other four named stakeholder groups are practically forgotten.

Yet it was the teachers, and the SADTU teachers in particular, who “came to the party” with “Assessment for Learning” and other programmes under the auspices of the Curtis Nkondo Professional Development Institute, created by themselves. The teachers acted with an intention to make the QLTC a reality.

SADTU’s 2030 Vision statement, passed two years later in 2010 (attached) commits to (among the many other points), *“creating, through our classroom commitments, a nation that learns and advances its civilisation.”*

It goes on to say:

“The 2030 Vision represents a turning point in the history of SADTU and the pursuit of NDR objectives within the teacher community.

“The Vision is based on the view that we need to build a new teacher for an emerging South African society, rather than simply normalise something which was never normal.”

SADTU has taken repeated initiatives. SADTU’s Quality Public Education Campaign was launched on 8 March 2013.

It may be that, far from needing “non-negotiability”, South

Africa needs a negotiation – a dialogue – about the quality of education; that is to say, about the nature of education, and what it is for.

Merely declaring “non-negotiability” does not convert what is quantitatively relative, into something qualitatively absolute. Such a declaration only reveals a desire for firmness, while it displays a lack of firmness, a lack of concreteness, and equivocation between multiple bullet-points.

This course, so far, has explored what education might be, in its largest conception. We have found that the process of education is inseparable from politics, inseparable from liberation, and inseparable from a struggle for People’s Power.

The purpose of education is to change the world, and not to reproduce the *status quo*. SADTU recognises this.

Qualitative education will recognise, as Lev Vygotsky recognised, that it is qualitative crises that mark the education of a child in its development towards becoming an adult. It will recognise that these intense but necessary crises cannot be adequately comprehended quantitatively (i.e. by numbers).

Qualitative education will recognise that the social life of adults, as a community, must also pass through similar, but new, qualitative, revolutionary changes, and that the

preparation of children for life must therefore also be, quite openly and explicitly, the preparation of children as revolutionaries.

No other kind of education will do, for South Africa.

- The above is to introduce the original reading-texts: [QLTC Non-Negotiables, 2008](#); [The South African Democratic Teachers Union's 2030 Vision, 2010](#).
- To download any of the CU courses in PDF files [please click here](#).